

**Date:** 2018

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**Category:** Commissioned Essays

***John E. Fetzer and Subtle Energy Medicine***

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In my view, living things represent a form of transmission, reception, and amplification of electronic wave forms, [which] faces head-on the question, that as a dynamic force of energy, we are much more than mere chemical machines.

——John E. Fetzer, “1988 World Conference Concluding Remarks” (p. 5)

In the early 1980s, the John E. Fetzer Foundation shifted its funding priorities from research in parapsychology to the allied but much more narrowly focused field of subtle energy medicine. Subtle energy medicine was a field that was just beginning to bloom in the 1980s, and Fetzer’s psychic advisors, Kenneth Killick and Jim Gordon, both advised him to move in this direction. Fetzer’s own health problems and those of his wife, Rhea, were probably also motivations for the shift. However, there were deeper reasons for Fetzer reorienting his foundation’s efforts in this direction, reasons that had to do with his evolving New Age worldview, his desire to scientifically validate that worldview, and even his desire to answer some abiding metaphysical questions that went all the way back to his childhood days when he was first introduced to radio, all of which the parapsychological research he was then funding had failed to do. Thus, given Fetzer’s enthusiasm for subtle energy medicine in his last years, as well as its importance in the development of the Fetzer Foundation’s research agenda, this paper will first trace a broad outline of the history of subtle energy medicine, and then discuss in detail the specific subtle energy medicine projects supported by the Fetzer Foundation in the 1980s and beyond.

Before beginning, however, a few definitions are in order. Subtle energy medicine is based on the idea that health and wellness depends on the free flow of subtle energy through the body. This is an ancient idea in Asia, where it informs the practices of Ayurvedic medicine, based on the subtle energy *prana*, and traditional Chinese medicine, based on a counterpart subtle energy, *qi*. Energy medicine’s roots in the west are ancient, too, with the idea of subtle energies, variously conceived, forming the basis for the early proto-scientific theories of life and health that came to be grouped under the rubric of vitalism. Vitalism posited the idea that life could not be accounted for simply by physical and chemical forces, but needs something

more, a vital spark or force, often conceptualized as the soul or spirit. Despite the rise of more mechanistic theories of life and health, the theory of vitalism continued to underwrite subtle energy healing as it developed in the west.<sup>1</sup>

“Subtle energy” here is a carefully chosen modern term for something that has assumed a myriad names in the past. In addition to being an umbrella term by which the nature of *prana*, *qi*, vital spark, vital energy etc. are all posited to be one phenomenon, it also papers over ideological cleavages within the field of energy medicine today. In the ancient world, the idea that non-empirical energies were non-material or spiritual in nature was accepted without comment since it fit within the reigning worldviews of the day. However, with the rise of materialist science in the west, such energies became suspect. The modern discovery of electromagnetism, that is, energies that are largely invisible but empirically verifiable, held out the possibility that what had been seen in the past as spiritual energy, was simply a form of electromagnetism for which appropriate detection devices had yet to be developed. Thus today, among practitioners and researchers, the term subtle energy can accommodate at least three different positions as to its nature: (1) subtle energy is spiritual in nature and fundamentally different from material energy; (2) subtle energy is simply a more subtle form of material energy; and (3) material energy is actually a gross form of spiritual energy. Of these three, the last two are by the most widely held, in large part because of the monistic presuppositions of most people who work in this field, be they material monists following the dictates of natural science or spiritual monists who foresee a more spiritualized science.<sup>2</sup> Of these, John Fetzer clearly fell in the later camp.<sup>3</sup>

### ***A Brief History of Subtle Energy Medicine in the West***

Perhaps one of the oldest questions that humankind has sought to answer is what divides the living from the dead. Beginning in the ancient world, many answers to this question postulated some supernatural component; and to capture the fundamental dynamism of life, this supernatural component was oftentimes symbolized by breath, as in the Hebrew Bible’s *ruah* or the New Testament’s *pneuma*, a usage adopted from the Greeks. The Greeks themselves had no shortage of metaphors from the dynamic essence of life, with the pre-Socratics positing in turn as the necessary principle of life, water, fire, earth, and *nous* (mind). Thus it was Hippocrates (460-370 BCE), the so-called “father of medicine” who combined fire with *nous* to create “ether, the subtle fire which has existed from all eternity and is present in air and all matter.” Ether, this early physician conceived, “is immortal,

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<sup>1</sup> The number of sources freely combining western and eastern notions of subtle energy for healing is legion: see, for example, Davidson (1988), Coddington (1990), Shealy (2011).

<sup>2</sup> Spiritual monism is the cosmological notion that all in the universe is ultimately spirit. Also, I employ this term to differentiate it from material monism, the dominant worldview of the natural sciences.

<sup>3</sup> “The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine has classified energy medicine therapies into 2 basic categories: the *veritable* or bioelectromagnetic-based therapies, and *putative* energy field (also called ‘biofields’) therapies” (Denner 2009, p. 317).

knowing, seeing and hearing all..., working noiselessly, being neither tangible nor visible,” and ultimately “single in essence though manifold in qualities.” Later, Plato (428-347 BCE) would localize this “subtle fire” in various centers in the body, which he referred to as *pnuema*, translated here as “soul” to differentiate it from the more elementary meaning of simply “breath.” Plato’s equation of *pnuema* with soul was an idea that would later be developed in complex ways by his students into the school of Pneumatics, of whom the Roman physician, Claudius Galenus (130-210), was the most influential in this regard. Galen’s ideas formed the basis for a theory of life that dominated the development of European medicine until well into the early modern period, when more empirical approaches, such as those of Paracelsus (1493-1541), began to chip away at the details of Galenic dogma.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the fundamental idea underlying these pneumatic approaches—that life is due to the pervading presence of a spiritual “vital force”—persisted in the west well into the modern period, with the general theory now christened “vitalism.” Now, however, rival theories had arisen to contradict it, beginning with René Descartes (1596-1650), who argued that “life, both human and animal, was a purely mechanical process and that the soul, which was absent in animals, ... had no concern in vital activity.” Such mechanical theories, while not denying the soul, safely isolated it, opening the way for experimental biology to explain the growth and animation of the body with material (physical and chemical) forces, which it proceeded to do with marked success. Despite this, vitalistic theories still survived and multiplied, and what’s more, in addition to claiming that life was based on a vital force, these new systems also promoted the idea that vital force could be systematically manipulated and infused into the human body to encourage health and healing. Such early vital force healing systems would lay the foundations for modern subtle energy healing in the West.<sup>5</sup>

### *Homeopathy*

One of the most influential of these systems was homeopathy. The physician Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) grew dissatisfied with the success of the regular medicine of his day and began a systematic search for efficacious drugs whose mechanism of action could be empirically verified. He hit upon the drug quinine, which had been used for centuries in the successful treatment of malaria. Testing it on himself, Hahnemann noticed that the drug provoked in a healthy person all the symptoms found in persons suffering from malaria. From this he concluded that the drug worked precisely because it mimicked malaria’s symptoms. Through extensive testing of other such drugs, Hahnemann concluded that this was the action of all truly effective drugs, codifying his discovery into a medical “law”: *similia similibus curantur*, that is, like cures like, also known as the “Law of Similars.” Hahnemann coined the term “homeopathy” (Greek for “like [the] disease”) as a descriptive name

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<sup>4</sup> Meyers (1900), pp. 218-233; Becker and Marino (1982), pp. 3-4. See also Wheeler (1939) for an extensive study of the varieties of vitalism through history.

<sup>5</sup> Becker and Marino (1982), pp. 5-7; see also Wheeler (1939).

for his new system of treatment. Regular medicine, since it sought drugs that would provoke symptoms opposite to those of the disease, he called “allopathy” (Greek for “other than [the] disease”).<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps needless to say, regular physicians were dubious about *similia similibus curantur*, but their incredulity only increased when Hahnemann introduced his “Law of Infinitesimals.” Hahnemann noticed that when a drug was given to healthy person in large doses, the symptoms in some cases became life threatening, so he experimented with smaller and smaller doses. Much to his surprise, Hahnemann found that these much smaller doses worked as or more effectively than larger doses. By successively diluting drugs in either milk sugar or grain alcohol, Hahnemann found that a drug diluted even thirty times retained its effectiveness. Indeed, Hahnemann’s followers claimed that drugs diluted a hundred, a thousand, or even 16 thousand times retained its healing powers. Critics pointed out that at such extreme dilutions, it was extremely unlikely that even an infinitesimal quantity of the drug would remain, but homeopaths countered that the cure spoke for itself. Hahnemann explained the action of such “infinitesimals” by making recourse to vitalism, that is, that life in the body is animated by a non-material vital spirit, which, when depressed, causes disease and ultimately death. Since the vital spirit is non-material, it cannot be affected by material means, only spiritual. The action of extreme dilution of drugs, Hahnemann hypothesized, stripped away the material elements leaving only the spiritual essence of the drug. It was precisely the fact that this essence was spiritual not material that allowed an infinitesimal to strengthen the body’s vital spirit by “cancelling out” the morbidity affecting it.<sup>7</sup>

### *Mesmerism and Magnetic Healing*

A very different system of subtle energy healing, one not based on drugs, was developed by the Viennese physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). Like Hahnemann, Mesmer was trained in orthodox medicine, but became disenchanted with mechanical theories of life and health. Mesmer maintained that health indicated an ample supply of “vital fluid,” while disease indicated a deficit of “vital fluid” or its stagnation in the body. Moreover, Mesmer theorized that the entire universe was permeated by this “vital fluid.” Since Mesmer believed that vital fluid could be influenced and directed by magnets, he called it “animal magnetism.” Mesmer taught that certain human beings had the ability to channel “animal magnetism” into those people suffering ill health, thus curing them by energizing them. Further, he believed that “animal magnetism” could be channeled into inanimate objects such as the *baquet*, a tub made of wood filled with water, in which

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<sup>6</sup> Whorton (2002), pp. 49-76; Fuller (1989), pp. 22-26; for an insider’s history of homeopathy, see Wood (1992).

<sup>7</sup> Another widely used drug-based therapy based on the notion of vital energy are the Bach Flower Essences developed by the homeopath Dr. Edward Bach (1886-1936) (Wood [1992], pp. 185-94; Gerber [2000], pp. 181-218).

“animal magnetism” could be stored as in a battery and then infused into sick people who grasped iron rods protruding from the tub. Mesmer reportedly had tremendous success with his “magnetic” treatments, but was driven out of Vienna by the regular medical fraternity. From Vienna, Mesmer established himself in Paris, where he again met with success and fame, until he was forced to move again, this time by the French Revolution of 1789. Although news of mesmeric or magnetic healing reached America during his lifetime, it wasn’t until the Jacksonian Period that magnetic healing caught in the U.S. From this period on, however, magnetic healers such as John Bovee Dods and Joseph Buchanan would become a mainstay of the alternative medical scene in this country.<sup>8</sup>

Mesmerism gave rise to two related traditions, Osteopathy and Chiropractic. Osteopathy was the brainchild of Andrew Taylor Still (1828-1917). Still grew up in the Midwest, the son of an itinerant Methodist preacher who supplemented his sermons with some doctoring on the side. Young Andrew was fascinated early on by the healing arts of his father and resolved to become a doctor himself. Still was largely self-taught and, without licensing laws to hinder him, he set up a regular practice in Baldwin, Kansas in 1854. One of Still’s early specialties was bone setting, both the resetting of fractures, but also the manipulation of dislocations and spinal massage. This allowed him to gain a thorough knowledge of human musculoskeletal anatomy, but also suggested to him that the malfunction of organs might be due to misalignment of the bones. To Still, the human body was a masterpiece of God’s design and like any machine, had to have its parts and mechanisms always in precise alignment for the highest functioning.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1860s, after service in the Army Medical Corps during the Civil War, Still grew frustrated with regular medicine, and renounced the use of drugs and surgery to cure disease. Instead, influenced by Spiritualism and mesmerism, he set up shop in Kirksville, Missouri, as a magnetic healer, where he developed the notion that health in the body was due to the free movement of vital fluid (God’s “highest known order of force”) carried by the blood through the circulatory system. Anything that impeded the free flowing of this God-given “electricity” caused disease, and Still came to believe that these blockages were most frequently due to misaligned bones. After having a great deal of success using his method of “lightening bone-setting” to cure ailments as diverse as asthma, diarrhea, paralysis, and headache, Still set about to systemize his treatments, which he came to call osteopathy (“oseto” = bone, “pathy” = disease). In the beginning, osteopathy was seen by Still as a panacea revealed to him by God, which would obviate the need for any other kind of medical practice, a claim that, not surprisingly, caused an uproar among the regular doctors of the region. Nevertheless, patients flocked to Still’s osteopathic clinic and in 1892, he opened in Kirksville the American School of Osteopathy, the first of several such schools to open throughout the United States and offer a degree in Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.). There soon followed professional

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<sup>8</sup> Whorton (2002), pp. 112-16; Fuller (1989), pp. 38-49.

<sup>9</sup> For this and the following paragraph, see Whorton (2002), pp. 141-63; Fuller (1989), pp. 81-90.

journals dedicated to Osteopathy, as well as a national professional organization, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) in 1897.

Remarkably similar to Osteopathy, Chiropractic, too, depends on physical manipulations to cure disease. Chiropractic was the discovery of D. D. Palmer (1845-1913), a grocer from Davenport, Iowa, who, in 1885, switched to magnetic healing and found great success in the art. Palmer was a very “hands on” healer, often pressing, slapping, and massaging his patients to facilitate the transfer of animal magnetism. In the process of his vigorous treatments, Palmer identified a dislocated vertebra in the spine of a man suffering from deafness; by pressing the vertebra back into place, the man was reportedly cured. From then on, Palmer focused on manipulations of the spine as his primary treatment modality, reasoning (in much the way that Still had) that misalignments in the spine blocked the flow of vital fluid and that such blockages were the single cause of disease in the body.<sup>10</sup>

True to his background in mesmerism and Spiritualism, Palmer taught that an intelligent fluid, which he called “Innate,” emanated from God and was the source of all life in the universe; indeed, Innate was one small part of God himself and as such, all life is essentially an expression of God’s “unfoldment” in the universe. In the human body, Innate is first centered in the brain and then circulated throughout the body through the nerves. It stands to reason, then, that anything impinging on the nerves would cause distress, and since the vast majority of the nervous system is found in proximity to the spinal column, it was obvious to Palmer that disarrangements of the spine are the primary cause of human disease. Importantly for Palmer, Innate not only had an important role to play in a person’s material wellbeing, but the free flow of the material also influenced a person’s moral nature and spiritual development. Therefore, in Palmer’s system, treatment of “subluxations” (vertebral misalignments) was imperative for both the physical and spiritual health of the patient—something that could not be claimed for the drug and surgical treatments of regular doctors. Chiropractic spread fast. In 1897, Palmer opened the Davenport Chiropractic School, and graduates of the school went on to found similar colleges in Iowa, Minnesota, and Oregon offering the Doctor of Chiropractic degree (D. C.). Journals in the field were also published, and a national professional organization, the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), was created in 1905. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, D.D. Palmer’s son, B. J. Palmer, carried on the work.

### *Odic Force and Orgone Energy*

Another of Mesmer’s intellectual children was Baron Karl von Reichenbach (1788-1869), a successful German scientist and industrialist whose immense wealth from the invention of such industrial products as paraffin and creosote allowed him a great deal of scientific freedom in latter life. One of Reichenbach’s interests was to understand the phenomenon of sleepwalking, and his success at treating

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<sup>10</sup> For this and the following paragraph, see Whorton (2002), pp. 165-90; Fuller (1989), pp. 66-81.

sleepwalkers using mesmeric passes inspired him to try to induce symptoms in them in a completely darkened room by means of a wire attached to a distant metal plate exposed to moonlight. His patients' perceptions of energetic sensations when approached by the wire led the Baron to postulate a new subtle energy he called "Odic force" or simply "Od," after the pagan god, Wodin. Od apparently could permeate all materials and under certain circumstances of absolute blackness, it could be experienced as heat or cold, as different flavors, or as a faint luminosity haloing things, plants, and people (this last led the Baron to recognize the legitimacy of certain super-sensitives who could spontaneously perceive a person's aura). Moreover, many materials such as magnets, metals, minerals, glass, water, and herbs could concentrate the Od that was constantly flowing in from the cosmos, with the highly organized structure of crystals producing the most powerful Od effects on human subjects. And finally, depending on the luminous color it gave off, Od was either more or less vitalizing to the human body, ranging from Od positive to Od negative. This guided him to the conclusion that certain kinds of Odic force were the basis for the universal "life-force" long sought by the vitalists, and that a more thoroughgoing Odic science would lead to cures yet undreamed of by medical science.<sup>11</sup>

Following in the footsteps of both Mesmer and Reichenbach, was Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957), a psychiatrist who studied in Vienna under Freud (who also was inspired in his own way by Mesmer). Early Freudian theory postulated a sexual energy in the body called the "libido" that was most powerfully manifested when discharged in orgasm and which when blocked, manifested itself as neurosis. Despite the fact that Freud himself abandoned a literal interpretation of libido as energy, Reich persisted in this belief, eventually postulating that all health, not simply mental health, depended on the free flow of this energy, which he christened "orgone energy." Reich was convinced that orgone energy had an objective existence and could be measured, if properly sensitive devices could be developed. In addition, Reich claimed that through spontaneous generation he could create living cells, which he called "bions." Bions, he claimed, radiated such high levels of orgone energy that it could be seen plainly as a bluish light. Relocating to America in 1939, Reich sought to concentrate the subtle energy from bions by creating boxes specially designed with alternating layers of organic and metallic materials. Soon it was discovered that, in the absence of bions, the boxes naturally accumulated orgone energy directly from the atmosphere, suggesting the ubiquitous nature of orgone energy. By 1941, Reich had built orgone accumulators large enough to accommodate human body so that he could begin experimenting on the possible curative effects of orgone energy on cancer patients. Unfortunately for Reich, the manufacture and sale of orgone accumulators as medical devices aroused the interest of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which sought a court injunction to ban the devices as quackery. Refusing to cooperate with the court, Reich was

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<sup>11</sup> Reichenbach (1968); Vassiliatos (1998); Coddington (1990), pp. 66-69.

charged with criminal contempt of court and sentenced to two years in jail, where he died in 1957.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of his life, Reich was referring to orgone energy as “Cosmic Life Energy,” and under both names, Reich’s work continued to inspire inventors desirous of harvesting this subtle energy for healing purposes, the most conspicuous of which were the 1970s’ promoters of “pyramid power,” a marrying of the folk belief in the special efficacy of pyramid shape to preserve organic materials (e.g. mummies in ancient Egypt) with the theory of orgone accumulation. Seen now as a powerful form of orgone accumulator, pyramids were now touted as ideal healing chambers and numerous books and articles provided plans for their backyard construction.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Eastern Forms of Subtle Energy Healing in the West***

Of course, the oldest and most consistently elaborated subtle energy healing systems come from Asia. One of the earliest such systems introduced to the modern west was derived from Indian sources, although modified substantially through western translation. This is the chakra system, adapted from tantric forms of Hindu practice according to which a yogi meditates on a series of focal points or chakras (Sanskrit for “wheels”) that exist within his subtle body, that is, the spiritual counterpart to the material body. The chakras are imagined to revolve around a structure within the subtle body called the Shushumna channel paralleling the spine. As the yogi perfects his meditation practice by breath control and other means, a subtle energy known as kundalini is said to rise through the Shushumna channel, causing the manifestation of a variety of spiritual effects. These tantric practices were presented to western academic audiences in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the works of such scholars as John Woodroffe, Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell. However, the most influential popularizers of this tantric system were Theosophists, starting with C. W. Leadbeater, whose books *The Inner Life* (1910) and *The Chakras* (1927) promoted several novel notions about the chakras: that their number was fixed at seven; that each could be psychically perceived and identified by a specific color; that the chakras were essentially whirling vortexes of energy; and that through meditation, these “energy centers grow larger and rotate at a higher speed,” affecting the color and intensity of the subtle energetic envelope or “aura” surrounding the human body.<sup>14</sup> What’s more, and crucially for the development of energy medicine in the west,

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<sup>12</sup> Raknes (1970); Greenfield (1974); Wilson (1982).

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Hardy et al. (1987).

<sup>14</sup> Hammer (2004), pp. 181-87; see also Leland (2016). Although Reichenbach, among others, had reported that sensitives could see an aura around the human body, it appears that it was Leadbeater who popularized this idea as part of his interpretation of Blavatsky’s teachings on the complex subtle anatomy (i.e., subtle bodies) of human beings (see *The Inner Life* [1910], as well as *Man Visible and Invisible* [1903]). In 1939, the Russian Semyon Kirlian developed a technique whereby, he claimed, the aura of living beings could be photographed in color (Davidson [1987], pp. 250-52); Gerber [2000], pp. 24-28).

Leadbeater may also have been the first to suggest that the chakras are the links that connect the physical body and the various subtle bodies (i.e. the etheric, astral, mental and other bodies). Theosophical doctrine implies that the chakras are receivers and transmitters of a cosmic vital force necessary to the well being of the individual. Thus, Leadbeater is the originator of the prevalent New Age praxis of healing, balancing or unblocking the chakras through various forms of ritual.<sup>15</sup>

After Leadbeater, the healing use of chakra theory was picked up and disseminated by a wide variety of writers within the Theosophical orbit, including Alice Bailey, Shafica Karagulla, and Dora Kunz.<sup>16</sup> Outside of this orbit, but heavily influenced by it, we also find any number of spiritual healers who have appropriated and developed the chakras, including the “Sleeping Prophet,” Edgar Cayce.<sup>17</sup>

### *Ayurvedic Medicine*

The chakra system was actually just one facet of a much more comprehensive system of traditional Indian medicine, known as Ayurveda. Ayurveda, which literally means knowledge (Sanskrit, *veda*) of life (Sanskrit, *ayur*), traces its roots back to the Vedas, a series of texts produced as early as the third millennium BCE that are the foundation of classical Hinduism. As Ayurvedic medicine developed, Ayurvedic doctors maintained a holistic emphasis on such familiar things as diet, herbal and mineral drugs, and massage, but also on such practices as yoga, breathing techniques (*pranayama*), meditation, in addition to chakra balancing. The efficacy of Ayurvedic medicine is based on the traditional Indian worldview, the understanding of which is key to understanding the claims made for its treatments. At the root of the Ayurvedic cosmology is a belief in *prana*, an energy that pervades the universe and provides the life force for the body. Free flow of *prana* is essential both for the functioning of the macrocosm, but also for the functioning of the microcosm, the human body. While long practiced and available within Indian communities in the United States after the liberalization of Asian immigration in 1965, Ayurvedic medicine only really came to the notice of the larger American public through the work of Deepak Chopra (b. 1946), an Indian-American physician who, while trained in regular medicine, nevertheless came to champion Ayurvedic as a holistic and natural alternative to the impersonal nature of modern biomedicine. Through a series of books (e.g. *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* [1994]) and through his institute, the Chopra Center for Wellbeing, the doctor has vigorously promoted Ayurvedic, emphasizing its claims to maintain high-level wellness throughout a person’s life, which, he claims, Ayurveda can dramatically prolong.<sup>18</sup>

### *Acupuncture*

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<sup>15</sup> Hammer (2004), p. 186.

<sup>16</sup> Bailey (1930); Karagulla and Kunz (1989).

<sup>17</sup> Shealy (2011), pp. 73-75.

<sup>18</sup> Knipe (1989).

The other major subtle energy healing system of Asian origin is, of course, acupuncture, a cornerstone of traditional Chinese medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine has much in common with ancient Ayurvedic medicine, and some have speculated that India influenced China in this regard. The word acupuncture literally means “needle (*acus*, Latin for needle) puncture.” Acupuncture is the western name given to an ancient Chinese system that utilizes the insertion of extremely fine needles into strategic points of the body to alleviate pain and to cure disease. The West had long been aware of acupuncture (the word having been coined by Dutch physician Willem ten Rhijne in 1684), but it was the political opening of China to the West following the visit of President Richard Nixon in 1972 to renew western in this ancient medical practice. Media reports of acupuncture resulted in the rise of its use here, although western physicians to this day have not come up with acceptable physiological reasons for why it works. Again, to understand the explanation for how it works from the point of view of Chinese medicine, again one must understand some basic elements of the cosmological worldview that lies behind it.<sup>19</sup>

The Chinese cosmos is rooted in the notion of the polarity of Yin and Yang, two opposite, yet complementary elements that make up the entire cosmos. Yin is often described as male, light, and rising, whereas Yang is often described as female, dark, and descending. Both Yin and Yang are necessary for the operation of the cosmos, so neither is more important than the other, and indeed, together they tend to harmonize and balance things out. Even more basic than Yin and Yang is the subtle or non-empirical energy, *qi* (pronounced “chi”). *Qi* is the life force, and when the Yin and the Yang of the universe are in balance, *qi* flows freely through all, and the cosmos operates as it should. When the universe is out of balance, however, *qi* flow is restricted and the order of the cosmos is threatened by disorder and, ultimately, chaos. Ancient Chinese medicine conceived of the human body as reflecting the structure of the cosmos, in other words, as a microcosm (“little cosmos”) reflecting the macrocosm (“big cosmos”). The body, too, is vivified by the flow of *qi* through its structure of Yin and Yang, and anything, whether it be physical, mental, or spiritual, that throws the body out of harmony and restricts the flow of *qi* will cause bodily disease. *Qi* flows through the body along certain channels, called “meridians,” which have been mapped by Chinese physicians and featured in complex charts that date back for centuries. By understanding the cosmological relationships between human organ systems and by knowing how *qi* flows through the body through the meridians, Chinese physicians claim that they can diagnose and treat successfully a variety of diseases by the insertion of needles into one or more of some 2,000 possible meridial points of the body. Importantly, the *qi* theory behind acupuncture has spawned an ever-increasing variety of modern subtle energy therapies that don’t involve needles and take their cue in part from the western bodywork techniques pioneered by Chiropractic and Osteopathy. These include acupressure, Reiki, Shiatsu massage, etc.

### ***Technological Approaches to Energy Medicine***

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<sup>19</sup> For this and the following paragraph, see Whorton (2002), pp. 256-70.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when on-demand generation of electricity was made possible by the invention of the chemical battery, physicians began to experiment with the effects of electricity on the human body. The fact that the human body conducted electrical currents suggested to some that electricity might be the elusive vital force necessary for life, thus setting off a controversy that raged throughout the following century. At this point, a consensus for mechanism was reached within the scientific community, such that “electricity, the last vestige of vitalism” was denied any role in living things. Nevertheless, experimentation into the therapeutic use of both electricity and magnetism continued, and this encouraged the invention a variety of electromagnetic machines to treat specific injuries and diseases. Indeed, the two pioneers of electrical technology, Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla, both sought to develop and patent electrical healing machines. In 1910, however, the Flexner Commission on medical education in its authoritative “Report” deemed such treatments unscientific and worthy of censure as quackery, thus putting an end for a time to mainstream research into the therapeutic use of electromagnetism.<sup>20</sup> And yet, this did not deter those health practitioners outside the mainstream, especially those with strong vitalistic—if not spiritual—commitments to continue experimenting with the use of electrical technology for health and wellness.

One of these was the American trance healer, Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) who “in a sleep-like state...gave almost 15,000 ‘readings,’ of which almost 10,000 were related to health.” Cayce recommended a number of different therapies, including the use of castor oil packs, crystals, colors, Osteopathy, meditation, magnetic healing etc. He also recommended the use of “energy devices,” including the Wet Cell Appliance, the Impendence Device, and the unfortunately named Radio-Active Appliance (which had more to do with radio waves than radioactivity). The first two devices delivered a weak electrical current to the body, while the third “builds and discharges body electrical energies that revivify portions of the body where there is lack of energies stored.” All three devices, however, work on the same principle: according to Cayce, “Electricity or vibration is the same energy, same power, ye call God...” and “vibration that is creative is of the same energy as life itself.” Further, since “the human body is made up of electronic vibrations, ...each atom and element of the body, each organ and organism [has] its electronic unit of vibration necessary for the sustenance of, and equilibrium in, that particular organism.” Thus, “when the force in any organ, or element of the body, becomes deficient in its ability to reproduce that equilibrium necessary for the sustenance of physical existence..., that portion becomes deficient in electronic energy.” What the body needs, then, is an input of energy to bring it (or a specific organ system) back to its proper level of vibration for healthy living. While the notion of re-charging the body with vital energy was an old one, Cayce’s emphasis on vibrational alignment as the mechanism by which vital energy acts was indicative of the dawning of a new phase of energy healing later called vibrational medicine.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Becker and Marino (1982), pp. 7-18.

<sup>21</sup> Coddington (1990), p. 73; Shealy (2011), pp. 69-98.

## *Radionics*

Years before Edgar Cayce postulated the vibratory nature of the human body, another pioneer had come to similar conclusions through empirical research, leading to the development of a new energy healing technology called radionics. In 1910, San Francisco physician, Dr. Albert Abrams, noticed that the percussion (tapping) of certain areas of the abdomen of a diseased individual yielded a different sound than that of a healthy individual. Two more observations led Abrams to believe that the percussive difference was due to the fact that healthy and diseased tissue radiated a subtle energy at different rates of vibration. The first observation was that the percussion effect could only be observed when the patient was facing west, suggesting to Abrams that the quality of percussion was influenced by the earth's magnetic field and thus indicated some form of energy at play. The second observation was that when a healthy patient was connected by means of a wire to a person with that disease (or simply a diseased tissue sample), the healthy patient manifested the percussive symptoms of a person with that disease. Both of these observations not only confirmed for Abrams that living tissues were indeed giving off a form of energy, but that an electronic machine could be devised to diagnose particular diseases based on their vibrational frequency. To do this, a variable resistance apparatus was introduced between the healthy patient and the diseased patient. This allowed the disease frequency to be associated with a specific resistance in ohms, which was discovered by turning a dial until the disease vibration was detected in the healthy patient by means of percussion. Abrams called this phenomenon the "electronic reaction of Abrams" (ERA), and by use of his machine, the doctor catalogued dozens of diseases by their ERA number.<sup>22</sup>

Another curious experiment led Abrams to assert that not only could he use his machine for diagnosis, but also for cure. By wiring a healthy patient on the one hand to a patient suffering malaria and on the other, to a vial containing quinine, Abrams found that the malaria ERA did not manifest in the healthy patient, leading him to conclude that the quinine was vibrating at a frequency that cancelled out that of the malaria (he also experimented with syphilis patients and mercury, reportedly with the same results). This suggested to Abrams a possible explanation for homeopathy's "like cures like," which in turn led him to claim that homeopathy could be done artificially with an electronic machine that broadcast the vibrational frequencies of drugs back to a diseased patient, thus curing ("cancelling out") the disease. Indeed, Abrams eventually dispensed with drug frequencies altogether when he found that by simply radiating back the vibrational frequency of disease itself the same curative effect was achieved. Thus was born the Oscilloclast, a machine that combined both Abrams' diagnostic and treatment features. Another name for this class of machines was "radionic" because it was believed that by

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<sup>22</sup> For this and the following three paragraphs, see Tansley (1982, 1996), Laurie (2009), Gerber (2000), pp. 330-69.

broadcasting energy at the correct treatment frequency, the body resonated in much the same way that a radio set resonates when bathed with radio waves.

Dr. Abrams' work was most famously continued by one of his students, a chiropractor named Ruth Drown. Dr. Drown, who was heavily influenced by Theosophy, used her own radiesthesia (psychic sensitivity to radiation) to dispense entirely with the healthy control body in favor of a rubber "stick plate" that she used to sense ERA directly from the sick patient (the "stick plate" has been said to function much like a diving rod functions for a dowser). Another improvement built on Dr. Abram's claim that he could use a drop of blood to diagnose a patient at a distance. Dr. Drown went further than this, claiming that not only could she diagnose distantly using a blood sample, but that her version of a radionics machine, called "Radio-Vision," could broadcast back to the distant patient the energy frequency necessary to heal the diagnosed disease. Perhaps needless to say, orthodox physicians saw this as rank quackery, and Dr. Drown was brought to trial by the state of California on charges of medical fraud and ended up spending time in jail for the marketing her equipment.

Despite these setbacks, Radionics research has continued, with one researcher, T. Galen Hieronymous, touting a machine that can diagnose distant patients radionically using only that person's photograph. He also claimed that he could cure agricultural crop infestations radionically by using samples of diseased leaves, research that was allegedly shut down by the pesticides industry because of its effectiveness. In England, where restrictions on this kind of research are less severe than in the US, radionics has been used to create machine, the Rae Potency Simulator, said to be able to imprint the energetic frequencies of popular homeopathic drug preparations on vials of water or alcohol, or on milk sugar tablets, which, when consumed by the patient, are claimed to have the same efficacy as the original homeopathic preparation. From its humble beginnings in San Francisco, a resilient and tenacious radionics subculture had developed in both the United States and the UK, making it one of the most recognizable, if controversial forms of subtle energy healing technology available today.

### *Pulsed Electromagnetic Frequency (PEMF) Devices*

Another form of technology that uses the putative vibrational qualities of living cells for therapeutic purposes are those called Pulsed Electromagnetic Frequency (PEMF) Devices. These machines are said to work by the exposing the body to high voltage oscillating ("pulsed") electromagnetic fields.<sup>23</sup> The origins of this technology for healing can be traced to Nikola Tesla, who in 1898 published a paper entitled, "High Frequency Oscillators for Electro-Therapeutic and Other Purposes." Here Tesla made the observation that bodies exposed to high voltage electric fields as generated by Tesla coils suffered neither pain nor ill effects, and, in fact, that such exposure might actually have a positive impact on the person's health,

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<sup>23</sup> Oschman (2016), pp. 82-84.

although “it remained to the physician to investigate the specific actions on the organism and indicate proper methods of treatment.”<sup>24</sup>

One of Tesla’s students, a Russian-French inventor named Georges Lakhovsky (1870-1942) subsequently developed this idea during the 1920s and ‘30s. Based on the work Alexander Gurvich, Lakhovsky believed that living cells naturally oscillated at a certain frequency and that if they fell below that frequency, then they were susceptible to disease. The ideal remedy, therefore, was not the ingestion of chemicals to kill the disease agent, but the recharging of cells’ natural vibratory rate by exposure to a broad band of electromagnetic radiation. As Lakhovsky put it, “The cells with very weak vibrations, when placed in the field of multiple vibrations, finds its own frequency and starts again to oscillate normally through the phenomenon of resonance.” To this end, Lakhovsky constructed the Radio-Cellulo-Oscillator, otherwise known as the Multiple Wave Oscillator (MWO), for which he secured two US patents. In several books, including *The Secret of Life* (1939), Lakhovsky made extravagant claims for his MWO, including that it cured cancer and other major diseases. Following his death, Lakhovsky’s work was taken up by many others, including Royal Rife, inventor of the Rife microscope. Rife created another resonance device, the Rife Frequency Instrument, which he also promoted as a cancer killer. During the late 1950s and ‘60s, such claims inevitably brought Rife and his associates into conflict with the AMA and the California Board of Health, both of which deemed his device not only ineffective, but also dangerous. Nevertheless, work in the area of Pulsed Electromagnetic Frequency (PEMF) devices continued throughout the rest of the century, with new machines, bearing such names as the Azure Therapy Device and the Tesla Photon Machine, marketed for public sale, despite the lack of regulatory approval by the FDA and AMA.<sup>25</sup>

### *Biofeedback*

A last technological approach to subtle energy medicine, albeit one very different from the vibrational healing outlined above, is known as biofeedback. That the brain produced clearly defined, albeit subtle electrical oscillations or “brainwaves” had been known since the 1920s. It was then that the German psychiatrist Hans Berger, inspired by a powerful psychic experience, created the first electroencephalogram (EEG) that could discriminate between the brain’s alpha, beta, delta, gamma, and theta waves. In the 1950s and ‘60s, researchers in the United States such Joe Kamiya at the University of Chicago and Barry Sternman at UCLA demonstrated that tonal feedback from an EEG could be used to train patients to place themselves in alpha and theta wave states, long associated with calmness and heightened awareness. Many subsequent researchers touted this not only as a potential treatment for chronic stress, various addictions, and other psychological maladies, but also as a possible drugless route to higher states of consciousness. Moreover, many speculated that eastern forms of meditation functioned along the

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<sup>24</sup> Telsa (1898), p. 477.

<sup>25</sup> Oschman (2016), pp. 88-89; Valone (2003).

same lines through specific physical and mental techniques that naturally induced such alpha and theta states, a hypothesis apparently confirmed in several studies on the practitioners of Transcendental Meditation (TM), which was introduced to the US by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the 1970s, and in the work of Elmer and Alyce Green, who worked with Hindu, Buddhist, Native American, and Sufi meditators. Despite much subsequent research, the effectiveness of alpha biofeedback for healing remains controversial, perhaps in part because no consensus has been reached on a plausible physical explanation for how the mind can affect brainwaves, nor on how brainwaves are correlated with specific physical and psychic states.<sup>26</sup>

### ***John E. Fetzer and Subtle Energy Medicine*<sup>27</sup>**

Biofeedback is a good place to transition to John Fetzer's interest in subtle energy healing, since it was one of the first forms of subtle energy healing that Fetzer became deeply involved in. In 1967, Fetzer's brother-in-law, Dr. Charles LeVant ("Vant") Yeager was a medical researcher at the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of California, San Francisco, when Fetzer sent him a letter asking for information on current ESP research.<sup>28</sup> This prompted Yeager to send him a brief overview of research at the Langley Porter Institute on the then new technique of biofeedback. The Langley Porter project was specifically aimed at training astronauts in biofeedback to make the isolation of spaceflight bearable. Fetzer was impressed by what Yeager sent him, writing that if such a "technique could be developed to maintain unlimited periods of self-containment, or as referred to in metaphysics as 'meditation,' the end result could bring about a complete revolution of attitudes."<sup>29</sup> In 1970, Fetzer visited Yeager at Langley Porter and was introduced to the staff, including Dr. Joe Kamiya, one of the pioneers of biofeedback, and submitted to having his traces of own brain waves made (Yeager characterized Fetzer's brainwaves as "well integrated").<sup>30</sup> By 1973, when the Foundation was looking for projects to support, Fetzer suggested to Yeager that biofeedback might be a good prospect. Yeager, however, was on the verge of retirement,<sup>31</sup> and while he would long remain involved in the project, the

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<sup>26</sup> Green and Green (1977); Moss (1998); Millett (2001).

<sup>27</sup> Material in this half of the essay is adapted from Brian C. Wilson, *John E. Fetzer and the Quest for the New Age* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2018), pp. 136-38, 176-79, 182-85.

<sup>28</sup> FP 4 (Correspondence 1967): "Charles LeVant Yeager to John E. Fetzer" (April 3, 1967) (R0213867).

<sup>29</sup> FP 4 (Correspondence 1969 X): "Charles LeVant Yeager to John E. Fetzer" (April 1, 1969); "John E. Fetzer to Charles LeVant Yeager (April 7, 1969) (R0213870). Early in his career, Yeager became an expert on the use of electroencephalograph (EEG) (see FP 7 [Yeager Papers 1939 III]: "An Ode to a Brain Wave" [undated] [R0213930]).

<sup>30</sup> TB 18 (Research Fetzer, Rhea—Diaries & Letters [Transcripts] [Restricted] 1968-1972): "1970 RYF" (May 4, 1970) (R0214577); TB 18 (Research Fetzer, Rhea—Diaries & Letters [Transcripts] [Restricted] 1973-1976): "1973 Rhea Fetzer's Diary and Personal Correspondence" (February 27, 1973) (R0214578).

<sup>31</sup> TB 18 (Research Fetzer, Rhea—Diaries & Letters [Transcripts] [Restricted] 1973-1976): "1974 Rhea Fetzer's Diary and Personal Correspondence" (September 30, 1974) (R0214578).

principal investigator at Langley Porter became Dr. James Hardt, who began to receive Foundation funding for biofeedback research that year.<sup>32</sup>

With the aid of Fetzer Foundation support, Hardt would soon become one of the premiere exponents of biofeedback in the United States. Over the following twelve years during which the Foundation funded his research, Hardt maintained a lively correspondence with his benefactor. He shared John Fetzer's interest in the paranormal and parapsychological research, believing that biofeedback could "bring about a quantum level increase in Human Consciousness."<sup>33</sup> In addition to its medical uses, Hardt was keenly interested in using the technique to explore human consciousness and the spiritual and psychic aspects of human beings, believing that the "core of the alpha experience" is "the mystical."<sup>34</sup> To this end, he did research in India on yogis and firewalkers, and on psychics and Zen meditators in San Francisco.<sup>35</sup> Hardt suggested in a letter to Fetzer that biofeedback might be a way to develop shared consciousness among human beings and perhaps even to free the astral body.<sup>36</sup>

Fetzer, too, came to believe that biofeedback had tremendous potential for "transcendental breakthrough events," perhaps becoming the means by which "alternate consciousness can be spread most effectively and rapidly throughout the cultures of mankind." Indeed, in 1978, Fetzer took time to listen to a series of biofeedback training tapes produced by Dr. Hardt, which he said induced in him "an intense feeling of well being, relaxation and sense of attunement," and which induced a mystical "feeling of communication with another mind." Fetzer eventually underwent extensive alpha biofeedback training with Dr. Hardt at his Tucson ranch in 1988.<sup>37</sup> What's more, Fetzer also attempted to stimulate biofeedback research at

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<sup>32</sup> "John E. Fetzer Foundation: Contributions Made—Year Ended 7/31/73" (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); FI 15 (Foundation Grants History): "John E. Fetzer Foundation History: Grants" (undated) (R0213288). See also "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Project Summary Presentation University of California Langley Porter Institute EEG and Higher Cortical Functions Project 1979-1982" (December 1982) (Fetzer Foundation Projects 1979-1981 Binder).

<sup>33</sup> FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1982 I): "James V. Hardt to John E. Fetzer" (undated) (R0213276); FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1980 I): "James V. Hardt, 'The Fetzer Foundation's Biofeedback Project: Long Term Training in EEG Feedback'" (undated) (R0213272).

<sup>34</sup> FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1979 I): "James V. Hardt to John E. Fetzer" (June 30, 1979) (R0213271).

<sup>35</sup> FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1979 I): "James V. Hardt to John E. Fetzer" (May 23, 1979, postcard) (R0213270); FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1984-86): "Maureen Sansing to John E. Fetzer" (April 9, 1984) (R0213280); "Annual Report: Long Term EEG Feedback Training Sponsored by the Fetzer Foundation" (undated but likely 1975) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1).

<sup>36</sup> FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1980 II): "James V. Hardt to John E. Fetzer" (September 8, 1980) (R0213273); FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1980 II): "John E. Fetzer to James V. Hardt" [October 7, 1980] [R0213273]. See also FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1982 I): "James V. Hardt to John E. Fetzer" (undated) (R0213276).

<sup>37</sup> FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1976): "John E. Fetzer to Charles LeVant Yeager" (October 22, 1976) (R0213267); FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1978): "John E. Fetzer to James V. Hardt" (May 16, 1978) (R0213269); FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr.

the local level, providing money for workshops at Kalamazoo College under the supervision of Psychology Professor Lonnie Supnick, and, in 1978, financing a Center for Biofeedback and Mind Control at Western Michigan University under the supervision of Dr. Richard R. Williams in the College of Health and Human Services. A year later, Williams, with Fetzer support, partnered with Bronson Hospital to develop a full-blown program in Holistic Health at WMU, with biofeedback as a key component.<sup>38</sup>

### *The New Fetzer Foundation Mission for the 1980s*

In part because of the successes of biofeedback and John Fetzer's personal enthusiasm for it, the early 1980s saw the Fetzer Foundation's decided shift away from the funding of parapsychological research to energy healing.<sup>39</sup> As a part of the larger "alternative healthcare" movement that was beginning to catch on in the United States, this new focus on "energy medicine" anticipated and in part sparked

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(UCSF) 1979 II): "John E. Fetzer to James V. Hardt" (December 27, 1979) (R0213271); FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1981 I): "John E. Fetzer to Lynne [Dailey]" (May 4, 1981) (R0213274); FI 14 (Hardt Project—Hardt, James, Dr. (UCSF) 1988): "James V. Hardt to Victor B. Eichler" (June 11, 1988) (R0213281). See also "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Project Summary Presentation University of California EEG Biofeedback Project 1979-1982" (December 1982) (Fetzer Foundation Projects 1979-1981 Binder).

<sup>38</sup> FI 15 (Foundation Grants History): "John E. Fetzer Foundation History: Grants" (undated) (R0213288); "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Committee Report" (July 10, 1975) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); "Memorandum of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation" (January 8, 1976) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); "Memorandum of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation" (July 2, 1976) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); "Memorandum of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." (October 21, 1976) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); "Memorandum of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation" (January 14, 1977) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); "Memorandum of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation" (February 10, 1978) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); "Memorandum of Executive Committee to the Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." (July 18, 1978) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1). See also Richard Williams Oral History (May 13, 2011) and "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Project Summary Presentation Western Michigan University Institute for Holistic Medicine 1979-1981" (December 1982) (Fetzer Foundation Projects 1979-1981 Binder). In addition, it should be mentioned that in 1978 a new initiative called the New Frontiers Program was funded at Kalamazoo College under the leadership of Wen Chao Chen and Carl Butters. The program was designed to promote "the reawakening of [the] holistic way of thinking," including in regards to health ("Memorandum of the Executive Committee to the Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." (October 11, 1978) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1). Edgar Mitchell's visit on May 13-14, 1979 kicked off the New Frontiers Program ("Memorandum of the Executive Committee to the Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." (May 30, 1979) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1). The last mention of funding of the New Frontiers Program occurs in "John E. Fetzer Foundation Statement of Earnings and Contributions Made for the Second Quarter Ended January 31, 1981" (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2). See also "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Project Summary Presentation Kalamazoo College New Frontiers Program 1979-1981" (December 1982) (Fetzer Foundation Projects 1979-1981 Binder).

<sup>39</sup> See the definition quoted in FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 III): "Harvey Grady to Clinic Staff and Interested Persons" (September 12, 1986) (R02.12976).

the widespread public enthusiasm for such research in the 1980s.<sup>40</sup> The Board fully supported Fetzer on this shift in Foundation priorities, as is indicated in this statement from the September 16, 1981 Board of Trustees minutes:

Several of our members have called attention to the fact that preliminary study of force field radiation, either created by instrumentation or that which is radiated from a natural body force, indicates considerable healing results are evident and such subjective phenomena needs further investigation. All of this seems to be an added dimension in the study of healing as a result of electronic radiation as contrasted with that of chemical and mechanical studies which for the most part have been a preoccupation in an enormous amount of research and development.

More specifically “...there is unanimous agreement [among the trustees] that henceforth our purpose should be redefined to initiate new scientific research which will study, design and produce electronic instrumentation to be used as an aid to diagnose, treat, and prevent illness.”<sup>41</sup> As Fetzer himself put in a 1981 letter to Brenda Dunne, “We are aware of a number of individuals who have produced and developed electronic equipment having great promise in connection with holistic health programs,” but “the medical community, for the most part, has denied even elementary examination of this great resource.” Thus, “there is an opportunity [for the Foundation] to fill this void ... and find the worthy instrumentation for healing and pain relief to promote health and well-being for a large segment of humanity.”<sup>42</sup>

Two years later, the Foundation board wished to formalize this new direction and called for the development of a new mission statement and program overview. This Chuck Spence and Bruce Fetzer did, taking into account, of course, advice from Jim Gordon’s channelings.<sup>43</sup> As stated in a working document called “Potential Goals from the Channelings,” the new mission of the Foundation would be to “form a network throughout the world of light” so that “the energies of this world will be changed to a higher vibrational growth, and the evolution of man shall be changed through our interactivities, the love of God, and the physical instrumentation that [will be] share[d] throughout the medical industry.” These ideas were amplified in the final version of the “Statement of Mission and Goals and Program Overview,” which Spence presented to the Board at their July 11, 1983 meeting. According to these documents, “The John E. Fetzer Foundation is dedicated to identifying and supporting innovative research concerning holistic health care delivery systems and techniques[,] ... which recognize the important role the dimensions of body, mind, and spirit play in the healing process.” Of special interest will be “research which

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<sup>40</sup> For a brief history of energy medicine in the United States, see Catherine L. Albanese, “Energy Medicine: The Spiritual Culture of an Emerging Paradigm,” *Odyssey* 3 (2000), pp. 12-36. For more on the general history of alternative medicine in the United States, see James C. Whorton, *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>41</sup> “Memorandum of Executive Committee to Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (September 16, 1981) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2).

<sup>42</sup> FI 16 (Princeton University—Jahn, Robert 1978-1986 IV): “John E. Fetzer to Brenda Dunne” (October 8, 1981) (R013318).

<sup>43</sup> For more on the channelings, see Brian C. Wilson, “John E. Fetzer and Channeling” (2017).

emphasizes the bio-electric or bio-magnetic nature of the human body.” To this end, the new goals of the Fetzer Foundation would be to “Encourage constructive and scholarly scientific investigation of all health care philosophies and techniques regardless of cultural origin or historical knowledge base.” These would be primarily “holistic health care techniques,” and especially “force field radiation healing therapy, including either instrumentation or natural body radiation techniques as related to physiological or psychological health maintenance and restoration.” In addition, the Foundation would “Facilitate the dissemination of health care research findings to academic and professional institutions ... and the general public,” while also “encourag[ing] development of public health education programs advocating a wellness philosophy which incorporates both total personal involvement and recognition of the inherent natural healing ability of the body.” The Board duly approved the new “Statement of Mission and Goals and Program Overview.”<sup>44</sup>

To some extent, the new mission did not entail a complete reorientation of the Foundation’s funding activities since some of the previous projects it funded easily fit within it. These included William’s Holistic Health Program at WMU and Hardt’s biofeedback studies (which continued to receive Fetzer funding until 1985).<sup>45</sup> Another such project that received funding before the new mission was approved was that of Dr. Herbert Benson from Harvard. One of the pioneers of mind/body medicine, Benson had done work on Transcendental Meditation, which formed the basis for his best-selling 1975 book, *The Relaxation Response*.<sup>46</sup> Fetzer contacted Benson after reading about *The Relaxation Response*, and this eventually led to an invitation to speak at Kalamazoo College in 1980 as part of a Fetzer-funded

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<sup>44</sup> “Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (July 11, 1983) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2). A year later, the mission was restated as: “The John E. Fetzer Foundation supports and provides research and education regarding the interrelationships between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions in fostering human potential.” Moreover, the goals now specifically referred to “energy field research” as the primary focus of the Foundation (“John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Annual Meeting” (August 1, 1984) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2). This mission statement and goals were then amended in 1987, substituting “energy medicine” for “energy field research” (“Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Committee Meeting” [February 2, 1987] [Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]).

<sup>45</sup> In 1982, the Foundation also funded “bio-energetic/synergistic research” with a local “aura-balancing” firm called Sansa Limited, but the project was terminated after a year (“Report of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” [June 23, 1982] [Fetzer Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]; “Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” [November 12, 1982] [Fetzer Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]). There is evidence that aura-balancing was used to treat Rhea Fetzer’s dementia, but how this was related to the above project is not known (“Nancy Lee [Meisterheimer] to John Fetzer” [August 5, 1980] [Channelings Binder]; see also Cleora Dailey Oral History [August 13, 2013], p. 12).

<sup>46</sup> Copies of Herbert Benson, *The Relaxation Response* (New York: Avon Books, 1975) and Herbert Benson, *Beyond the Relaxation Response: How to Harness the Healing Power of Your Personal Beliefs* (New York: Times Books, 1984) are extant in the archives. The latter has Fetzer’s annotations and is inscribed: “For John E. Fetzer With thanks and appreciation for your support. Herbert Benson, M.D. May 29, 1984.”

lecture series.<sup>47</sup> Soon after, Benson wrote to Fetzer requesting financial assistance for a new project that he and his team were planning involving Tibetan Buddhist monks. Through his contact with the Dalai Lama, Benson gained access to monks who practiced g Tum-mo yoga or heat yoga, which allowed them to raise their body temperatures at will, supposedly by drawing in *prana* (subtle energy) from the “inexhaustible ‘pranic’ reservoir of Nature.” The rise in body temperature, it was reported, was enough to dry sheets doused with ice water. Due in part to Fetzer support, Benson and his team were able to travel back to Dharamsala, India, to study and film this meditation practice, the results of which were published in *Nature*.<sup>48</sup> John Fetzer was thrilled by this research, as it confirmed his confidence in *The Life and Teaching of the Masters of the Far East*, commenting that, “finally what Spalding said is being done.”<sup>49</sup> Further funding followed, this time to underwrite a trip to China to investigate the work of Qi Gong masters in that country.<sup>50</sup> Benson’s work would continue to receive Foundation support until 1991.<sup>51</sup>

Another project during this period was related in many ways to Benson’s work with Tibetan monks. This was the work of Elmer Green at the Menninger Foundation, who was brought to the attention of the Fetzer Foundation by WMUs’ Richard Williams, whose mentor Dr. Green was.<sup>52</sup> Green was a pioneer in the field of biofeedback, and was one of the first to study this phenomenon in yogis and other spiritual adepts. In the 1980s, Green, who was fascinated by Spiritualist and Theosophical literature, was inspired by comments about meditation practices in the Theosophical classic, *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* (1924). According to the words of Master Kuthumi recorded in that book,

The methods used for developing lucidity in our chelas (student monks) may be easily used by you. Every temple has a dark room, the north wall of which is entirely covered with a sheet of mixed metal, chiefly copper, very highly polished, with a surface capable of reflecting in it things, as well as a mirror. The chela sits on an insulated stool, a three-legged bench placed in a flat-bottomed vessel of thick glass,—the lama operator likewise, the two forming with the mirror wall a triangle. A magnet with the North Pole up is suspended over the crown of the chela’s head without touching it. The operator having started the thing going leaves the chela alone gazing on the wall, and after the third time is no longer required.

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<sup>47</sup> Herbert Benson Oral History (March 28, 2012), pp. 5-6; Hegedus, *John Earl Fetzer* (2004), pp. 164-66.

<sup>48</sup> FI 14 (Benson, Herbert, Dr.—Harvard Medical School 1980): “Herbert Benson to John E. Fetzer” (May 8, 1980 & September 30, 1980) (R02.13261); FI 14 (Benson, Herbert, Dr.—Harvard Medical School 1982 I): “Herbert Benson to John E. Fetzer” (July 14, 1982) (R02.13263); FI 14 (Benson, Herbert, Dr.—Harvard Medical School 1982 II): “Herbert Benson to Fetzer Foundation Trustees” (July 27, 1982) (R02.13264); Herbert Benson *et al.*, “Body Temperature Changes During the Practice of g Tum-mo Yoga,” *Nature* 295:5846 (January 21, 1982), pp. 234-36.

<sup>49</sup> Hegedus, *John Earl Fetzer* (2004), p. 166.

<sup>50</sup> FI 14 (Benson, Herbert, Dr.—Harvard Medical School 1983): “Robert M. Leeds to Chuck Spence” (January 21, 1983) (R02.13265); FI 14 (Benson, Herbert, Dr.—Harvard Medical School 1983-1986): “Herbert Benson to Bruce Spence” (May 26, 1983) (R02.13266).

<sup>51</sup> FI 15 (Foundation Grants History): “John E. Fetzer Foundation History: Grants” (undated) (R0213288); Herbert Benson Oral History (March 28, 2012), p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Williams Oral History (May 13, 2011), pp. 2-3, 15-16.

Green interpreted the use of the magnet and the copper wall to mean that there were “measurable electric fields associated with a particular method of meditation,” and he wrote a research proposal in order to test this “copper wall” method of meditation. As Green tells it, Fetzer was instantly intrigued by the project after talking to him on the phone, and the board soon approved funding.<sup>53</sup> Green tested both “regular subjects” and “exceptional subjects,” that is, people who were noted sensitives or psychic healers. He found that while the “regular subjects” did not generate “anomalous voltage spikes” in the copper wall, the healers did, occasionally up to 60 volts. This strongly suggested to Green that he was witnessing what he called a genuine “MIOMA” (“mind over matter”) phenomenon, although years of testing and research, funded by the Foundation through 1987, failed to isolate exactly how and why this phenomenon occurs.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to these two researchers, the Fetzer Foundation renewed its ties to the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) under the new mission. In 1983, John Fetzer proposed creating the “John E. Fetzer Fund” within IONS to fund projects of which he specifically approved.<sup>55</sup> The first of these was a purely parapsychological project, the Life Beyond Death Foundation’s Spiricom, an electronic voice phenomenon (EVP) device invented by George Meek, by which he claimed he could contact the dead.<sup>56</sup> In keeping with the new mission, however, the major programs funded through IONS were oriented more towards alternative medicine. One such was the Inner Mechanisms of the Healing Response Program, an umbrella under which several mind-body research projects would be pursued that Fetzer believed were congruent with Gordon’s channelings. These included the then-new fields of psychoneuroimmunology (that is, the impact of emotional states on immune system

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<sup>53</sup> FI 16: (Menninger Foundation—Green, Elmer, Dr. 1983-1989 II): “Elmer Green, ‘Progress Notes on the New Psychophysics: on ‘Energy Physics’” (unpublished paper, November 1, 1984) (R02.13307); A. T. Barker (ed.), *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd edition (Rider and Co., London, England, [1923] 1948).

<sup>54</sup> Elmer E. Green, “Copper Wall Research: Psychology and Pyschophysics,” *Subtle Energies & Energy Medicine* 10:3 (1999), pp. 238-43; FI 16 (Menninger Foundation—Green, Elmer, Dr. 1983-1989 I): “Charles E. Spence to Roy W. Menninger” (November 16, 1983) (R02.13306); FI 16 (Menninger Foundation—Green, Elmer, Dr. 1983-1989 III): “Roy W. Menninger to John E. Fetzer” (August 7, 1987) (R02.13308).

<sup>55</sup> FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1983): “John E. Fetzer to Paul Temple” (September 19, 1983) (R02.13172); “Executive Committee Report to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (September 21, 1983) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2); FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1983): “Lynne Dailey to George Strom” (November 16, 1983) (R02.13172); FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1983): “Charles E. Spence to Barbara McNeill” (November 16, 1983) (R02.13172).

<sup>56</sup> FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1984 I): “Charles E. Spence to Barbara McNeill” (January 19, 1984) (R02.13173); “Report of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (January 19, 1984) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2); FI 15 (Life Beyond Death Research Foundation 1982-1984 I-1982-1984 IV) (R02.13300-03). See also George W. Meek, *After We Die, What Then?* (Columbus, OH: Ariel Press, 1987), pp. 157-58, 161-62, 170 (this book was in Fetzer’s personal library).

effectiveness) and dissociative states research (that is, the healing potential of altered states of consciousness).<sup>57</sup>

### *Fetzer and the A.R.E. Clinic*

Perhaps the most ambitious project under the new mission was the creation of the John E. Fetzer Institute of Energy Medicine Research in conjunction with the A.R.E. Clinic in Phoenix, Arizona. The Clinic, founded in 1970 by Drs. William and Gladys McGarey, was designed to apply the holistic health ideas of Edgar Cayce as revealed in his trance readings. The Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.), the original Cayce research foundation, was located in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and the Clinic operated under a “covenant relationship” with it. The McGareys had met Hugh Lynn Cayce, Edgar Cayce’s son, while he was on a speaking tour in Arizona in 1955. It took them a while to accept Cayce’s holistic approach to health and healing, which was based on the trinity of “Spirit is the life. Mind is the builder. The physical is the result.” Once they did, however, they created the A.R.E. Clinic to promote and test his ideas, such as the medicinal use of castor oil packs and techniques to manipulate subtle energies.<sup>58</sup>

In May 1984, Chuck Spence visited the Clinic on a fact-finding trip to “gather information regarding current activity in electromagnetic research and instrumentation.” After a tour led by Harvey Grady, the head of Education and Research for the A.R.E. Clinic (and a psychic in his own right), Spence returned enthusiastically recommending some kind of affiliation to the Clinic, stating that “The A.R.E. Clinic model could serve as the beginning point of our efforts to establish a network of holistic health clinics, develop a central laboratory for energy medicine research, and develop a central base for a high technology information/education

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<sup>57</sup> FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1984 II): “Inner Mechanisms of the Healing Response” (R02.13174); FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1984 II): “Lynne Dailey to Foundation Staff” (July 6, 1984) (R02.13174); “Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (February 1, 1985) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2); FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1985 II): “John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Project Report Summary IONS—Mechanisms of Healing” (October 10, 1985) (R02.13179); FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1985 II): “A Report on Recent Activities of The Inner Mechanisms Program” (September 1984-July 1985) (R02.13179); FI 10 (Institute of Noetic Science 1986-88): “Brendan O’Regan to John E. Fetzer” (March 23, 1988) (R02.13180).

<sup>58</sup> FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 II): “Edward M. Deron to Harvey Grady” (September 10, 1985) (R02.12975); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 II): “Edward M. Deron to I.R.S.” (September 11, 1985) (R02.12975); FI 2 (A.R.E. Clinic Board of Trustees Manual 1984-1985 I): “The A.R.E. Clinic Manual for Board Members” (undated) (R02.12977); FI 2 (A.R.E. Clinic Board of Trustees Manual 1984-1985 II): “The A.R.E. Clinic—Its Ideals, Purposes and Goals” (R02.12978); William A. McGarey, *The Edgar Cayce Remedies* (New York: Bantam, 1983), pp. 263-64; Analea McGarey, *Born to Heal: The Life Story of Holistic Health Pioneer Gladys Taylor McGarey, MD.* (Scottsdale, AZ: Inkwell Productions, 2003); Gladys McGarey Oral History (January 26, 2012); Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012). During Cayce’s lifetime, the Edgar Cayce hospital was founded in 1928 for this purpose in Virginia Beach, but it didn’t survive the Depression (Johnson, *Edgar Cayce in Context* [1998], pp. 7-8).

system concerning spiritual/mental/physical healing principles.” Long interested in Cayce’s readings, John Fetzer was soon visiting the Clinic himself and was likewise impressed (it probably helped that in conversation with Fetzer, Grady characterized the A.R.E. Clinic’s work as a continuation of similar work begun in Atlantis). Grady was encouraged to write a grant proposal, which he did, calling for the creation of the John E. Fetzer Institute of Energy Medicine Research (F.E.M.R.I.).<sup>59</sup>

At the August 1 meeting of the Fetzer Board, \$311,846 was approved for the A.R.E. project.<sup>60</sup> By November, Grady had begun hiring staff for the Institute and created a technical advisory board consisting of Norm Shealy, a neurosurgeon; William Tiller, a Stanford physicist; Stanley Krippner, a psychologist and parapsychologist; Robert Nunley, a geographer; and Elmer Green from the Menninger Institute.<sup>61</sup> The following February, in conjunction with the annual A.R.E. Clinic Symposium, the first meeting of the Fetzer Energy Medicine Research Institute (F.E.M.R.I.) was held in Phoenix. Here it was announced that cardiologist and surgeon Dr. Edward Stanton Maxey had been appointed as the Institute’s Research Director. By June, the Fetzer Foundation signed a 25-year “Covenant Relationship” with the Clinic, and on September 1, 1985, F.E.M.R.I. was up and running.<sup>62</sup> Soon, too, Fetzer staff began to attend the annual A.R.E. Clinic symposia held in Phoenix.<sup>63</sup>

During its first year of operation, one of the most important F.E.M.R.I. projects involved research into the “Kervran Effect” by Dr. Maxey and the biochemist, Dr. Justa Smith. This was based on the research of the French engineer, Louis Kervran, who claimed to have demonstrated the ability of plants to utilize subtle energies to effect biological transmutation of basic elements at the atomic level. Maxey and Smith sought to replicate Kervran’s results as part of a larger study of electromagnetic effects on biological systems, both plant and animal. Maxey had great hopes for this “unorthodox scientific” research, for he believed that “once the weak energy transmutation of atomic elements is replicated and announced

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<sup>59</sup> “Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (May 16, 1984) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2); Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012), pp. 9-11.

<sup>60</sup> “John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Annual Meeting” (August 1, 1984) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2).

<sup>61</sup> “Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (November 1, 1984) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2); “Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (February 3, 1986) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2); Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012), pp. 13, 29.

<sup>62</sup> FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 III): “William A. McGarey to John E. Fetzer” (June 1, 1987) (R02.12976); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 III): “A Covenant Relationship Between A.R.E. Clinic and the John E. Fetzer Foundation” (June 1, 1987) (R02.12976); “Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” (February 1, 1985) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2); Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012), p. 16; FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): “Proposal for John E. Fetzer Energy Research Institute Continuation—Second Year” (undated) (R02.12974).

<sup>63</sup> “John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Committee Meeting” (November 1, 1986) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 3); “John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Committee Meeting” (February 2, 1987) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 3); Linda Grdina Oral History (June 27, 1996), p. 24; Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012), p. 12.

simultaneously in several countries, the scientific community will be hard-pressed to prove or disprove it, thereby stimulating open discussion of the energy transactions associated with it.” This, in turn, would “advance research into the subtle energy domain, which [would] help to legitimize later research into the study of healers and the healing process.”<sup>64</sup> Another important F.E.M.R.I. project was the evaluation of the effectiveness of the “apparatus for measuring the functioning of meridians and their associated internal organs” (AMI for short) invented by Japanese parapsychologist, Hiroshi Motoyama. Based on Chinese acupuncture and the idea of the importance of the free circulation of chi (subtle energy) for bodily health, Motoyama’s AMI reportedly could measure chi-energy flow at the body’s 28 meridians and, through computer analysis, diagnose energy blockages that could then be cured through acupuncture.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the Institute also conducted an “Electro-Medical Device Evaluation Service” designed to scientifically test existing subtle-energy healing devices then in use at the A.R.E. Clinic, as well as creating a computerized energy medicine library and database.<sup>66</sup> Later F.E.M.R.I. projects would include research into Kirlian photography for aura diagnosis, the medicinal value of castor oil packs, and the evaluation of the Cayce Impedance Device for the treatment of hypertension.<sup>67</sup>

Of all the projects pursued by F.E.M.R.I., perhaps the most fascinating to John Fetzer were those involving the development of new technologies to diagnose and treat disease through the manipulation of subtle energies. As he was to put it later, his early reading of the Tom Swift books, which chronicled the exploits of the

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<sup>64</sup> Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012), pp. 15-16; FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): “Proposal for John E. Fetzer Energy Research Institute Continuation—Second Year” (undated) (R02.12974); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): “Minutes of Plant Growth Project Planning Meeting” (March 30, 1985) (R02.12974). Later that year, Dr. Maxey would be brought to Kalamazoo to prepare a proposal for the broader study of electromagnetic effects on biological systems (“Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” [November 8, 1985] [Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]). Engineers contracted from the Florida Institute of Technology created the “environmental bubble” necessary for the project (“Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” [February 3, 1986] [Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): “Proposal for John E. Fetzer Energy Research Institute Continuation—Second Year” (undated) (R02.12974). The funding for this project was suspended at the May 5, 1986 Board Meeting “until our medical research staff have reviewed the program,” an apparent reference to the anticipated staff of the future John E. Fetzer Medical Institute. See also material in FI 11 (John Fetzer Life-Science Laboratory 1985 II) (R0213194).

<sup>65</sup> Hiroshi Motoyama, “Acupuncture Meridians,” *Science & Medicine* 6:4 (July/August 1999), pp. 48-53; FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): “Proposal for John E. Fetzer Energy Research Institute Continuation—Second Year” (undated) (R02.12974). Apparently, the Fetzer Foundation Board had already joined Motoyama’s association in 1982 (“Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc.” [December 30, 1982] [Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]).

<sup>66</sup> FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): “Proposal for John E. Fetzer Energy Research Institute Continuation—Second Year” (undated) (R02.12974).

<sup>67</sup> FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 III): “Harvey Grady to Clinic Staff and Interested Persons” (September 12, 1986) (R02.12976). See the following research reports prepared for F.E.M.R.I.: “Kirlian Corona Discharge Photography: A Method of Physiological Monitoring” (December 1988) (0388); “Immunomodulation through Castor Oil Packs” (December 1988) (0488); “Study of Cayce Impedance Device” (December 1988) (0588), all of which can be found in the Fetzer Archives.

eponymous boy inventor, had primed him to anticipate great advances in all technology. He was indeed thrilled that he had lived long enough to see science catch up with science fiction in this regard, especially as it related to healing through advanced electronics.<sup>68</sup> As early as 1980, on the advice of Ken Killick, Fetzer had bought a Radionics device called the Pathoclast, which according to its manufacturer was “capable of influencing and adjusting energy fields which surround every living organism.”<sup>69</sup> Killick perhaps also recommended to Fetzer the Lakhovsky Multiple Wave Oscillator, which was said to be able to cure cancer through the electromagnetic emissions of a specially designed Tesla coil. Research on the Lakhovsky device and other like devices was continued by F.E.M.R.I.<sup>70</sup> What’s more, this research was given a boost when the Fetzer Foundation underwrote much of the cost of the first Energy Medicine Conference in Madras, India, in 1987.

Brainchild of T. M. Srinivasan, a professor of biomedical engineering at the Madras Indian Institute of Technology, the Energy Medicine Conference brought together an international group of scientists working in the area, including staff members from the A.R.E. Clinic and F.E.M.R.I. Several members of the Fetzer Foundation staff such as Chuck Spence and Jim Gordon also attended (as a side note, the Fetzer group took the opportunity of the India trip to visit the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala to share with him John Fetzer’s vision for the Foundation). Dr. Srinivasan, who at the time of the Madras Conference was working on perfecting a sophisticated biofeedback device, was invited to relocate to the A.R.E. Clinic in Phoenix as research director of F.E.M.R.I. There, he edited the proceedings of the Madras conference and began work on the Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (P.E.F.) Coil, which functioned much like the Lakhovsky device, as well as a version of the Motoyama AMI machine called the F.E.M.R.I. Acupuncture Meridian Evaluator (F.A.M.E.). The following year, 1989, Srinivasan traveled to Kalamazoo, where he was tasked with setting up in the in-house energy medicine device research laboratory for the Fetzer Foundation. John Fetzer was especially keen on this project, since he believed that such devices would only be developed in spiritually-focused private labs where “hard science” can be employed by “minds which are inspired by the voice of divinity within.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> FI 7 (Foundation Correspondence 1989): “Draft of memorandum” (January 4, 1989) (R02.13116).

<sup>69</sup> The Pathoclast was sold by Elliot C. L. Maynard of the Borderland Sciences Research Foundation of Vista, California (FI 12 [Pathoclast—Maynard, C. L.] [R02.13232]).

<sup>70</sup> Fetzer reportedly had the Lakhovsky device built specifically to cure the cancer of a friend, probably Janice Anders, a member of the *A Course in Miracles* group (Hegedus, *John Earl Fetzer* [2004], pp. 176-78). Further research on the Lakhovsky Multiple Wave Oscillator was carried out by F.E.M.R.I.: FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 III): “Harvey Grady to Clinic Staff and Interested Persons” (September 12, 1986) (R02.12976); FI 12 (Lakhovsky, George [Lakhovshy Device] 1988 I): “The Lakhovsky Multiple Wave Oscillator: Electromagnetic Waves in Healing” (Fetzer Energy Medicine Research Institute Report (December 1988) #0188) [R02.13217] [also catalogued with bar code 003645]. See also FI 2 (Robert Beck [Lakhovsky Device] 1985-1986) (R02.12981); and other materials in FI 12 (Lakhovsky, George [Lakhovshy Device] 1988 I-III (R02.13217-9). Fetzer had already read about the Lakhovsky device in Alder, *The Initiation of the World* (1957), pp. 194-96.

<sup>71</sup> T. M. Srinivasan (ed.), *Energy Medicine Around the World* (Phoenix, AZ: Gabriel Press, 1988) (based on the papers presented at the Madras Energy Medicine Conference held from February 27 to March

So promising did the F.E.M.R.I. research appear to be, and enjoying the approbation of Jim Gordon's channeled Cato, John Fetzer envisioned an even closer connection with the McGareys and the A.R.E. Clinic.<sup>72</sup> As early 1986 plans were laid for a stand-alone John E. Fetzer Life Sciences Laboratory in Phoenix, and for an enlarged energy medicine treatment facility associated directly with the A.R.E. Clinic.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, for the next two years, the Fetzer Foundation explored legal options for closer ties to the A.R.E. Clinic, including the incorporation of something called the John E. Fetzer Medical Institute, which apparently existed only on paper, but was designed to ease some kind of merger.<sup>74</sup> None of these ambitious

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1, 1987); T. M. Srinivasan, "Pulsed Magnetic Field Coil," *Energylines* 2:3 (March 1989), pp. 1-4 (Fetzer Archives); T. M. Srinivasan, "MED (FAME) Device: Psychophysiological Correlates," in Michael A. Morton and Carrie Dlouhy (eds.), *Energy Fields in Medicine: A Study of Device Technology Based on Acupuncture Meridians and Chi Energy* (Kalamazoo, MI: The John E. Fetzer Foundation, 1989), pp. 338-49 (this book was based on the research presented at the "Energy Fields, Meridians, Chi and Device Technology Roundtable," held at the Fetzer Foundation from May 11-14, 1989). For Srinivasan's CV, see FI 18 (President's Office Lehman, Rob Board of Trustees Correspondence October 1989) (R0213351). See also "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Committee Meeting" (November 1, 1986) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 3); "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Committee Meeting" (February 2, 1987) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 3); "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Committee Meeting" (May 17, 1987) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 3); "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Minutes of Board of Trustees' Meeting" (September 30, 1989) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 3); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 III): "William A. McGarey to John E. Fetzer" (April 8, 1987) (R02.12976); Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012), pp. 15, 24; Richard Williams Oral History (May 13, 2011), pp. 15, 33; Vic Eichler Oral History (March 30, 2012), pp. 11-12; Lloyd Swierenga Oral History (August 6, 2012), pp. 29, 30, 33; Gladys McGarey Oral History (January 26, 2012), pp. 17-18. For John Fetzer's interest in an in-house lab, see "Report of Executive Committee to Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." (January 6, 1982) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 1); "John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. Executive Board of Trustees' Meeting" (March 3-4, 1989) (Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 3); FI 6 (Fetzer, John E.—Research in Foundation Laboratory [January 9, 1989]): "Research in Foundation Laboratory" (January 9, 1989) (R02.13082); FI 6 (Fetzer, John E.—"Thoughts on Research [October 4, 1989]): "Thoughts on Research" (October 4, 1989) (R02.13086). In the latter memo, Fetzer wrote that he believed that Edison and Einstein were willing and waiting to aid in this research from beyond the grave, an idea perhaps taken from Jim Gordon's channelings (FI 5 [Fetzer, John E.—Jim Gordon 1980-1985 XIV-XV]: "[Channeling]" [October 30, 1984] [R02.13062, 63]), although this idea also appears in Tuella, *World Messages for the Coming Decade* (1981), p. 58.

<sup>72</sup> FI 5 (Fetzer, John E.—Jim Gordon 1980-1985 XV): "[Channeling]" (November 2, 1984) (R02.13063); FI 5 (Fetzer, John E.—Jim Gordon 1980-1985 X, XVI): "[Channeling]" (November 14, 1984) (R02.13058, 64)

<sup>73</sup> FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): "Proposal for John E. Fetzer Energy Research Institute Continuation—Second Year" (undated) (R02.12974); FI 11 (John Fetzer Life-Science Laboratory 1985 I-III) (R0213193-5).

<sup>74</sup> FI 11 (John E. Fetzer Medical Institute June-July 1985-July 1986) (R0213196-R0213204); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): "Memorandum from Jay S. Ruffner (Lewis and Roca, Lawyers)" (June 5, 1985) (R02.12974); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): "Harvey Grady to Charles Spence" (June 6, 1985) (R02.12974); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): "John E. Fetzer to Staff Committee" (June 26, 1985) (R02.12974); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 I): "Chuck Spence to Harvey Grady" (June 5, 1985) (R02.12974); FI I (A.R.E. Clinic 1985-1989 III): "Memorandum [RE: John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. (JEFF)]—Control of Directors of A.R.E." (undated) (R02.12976). Apparently, following the legal advice of Ruffner as to the best way to create permanent ties to the A.R.E. Clinic (if not take it over outright), the Fetzer Board approved the establishment of the John E. Fetzer Medical Institute, which

institutional projects ever came to fruition, but the relationship between the Fetzer Foundation and the Clinic nevertheless remained strong for the rest of the 1980s. By the time the Fetzer Foundation ceased its funding in late 1989, \$1.5 million had been awarded to the F.E.M.R.I. and the A.R.E. Clinic.<sup>75</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

In the years after his death in 1991, the Fetzer Institute has grown and its programs have diversified. Throughout the 1990s, the Institute continued to pursue programs in energy medicine and holistic health broadly conceived. Significantly, the idea of an in-house research laboratory aimed at developing subtle energy devices was shelved as impractical, although the Institute continued to fund for a time subtle energy research, for example that of Jan Walleczek at the Bioelectromagnetics Laboratory at Stanford University. More and more focus, however, was directed towards mainstream studies of the emerging field of mind-body health, which resulted in the funding of Dr. David Eisenberg's groundbreaking study of the widespread use of "unconventional medicine" in America, and later, in collaboration with the NIH, rigorous empirical studies on the impact of spirituality on various facets of health and wellness. Too, the Institute focused on mind-body health education, which became an increasingly important component of the Institute's programs. Funded under this rubric were the popular PBS documentary series and book, *Healing and the Mind with Bill Moyers*; the Courage to Teach program of spiritual educator Parker Palmer; and the work on education for emotional intelligence by Daniel Goleman.<sup>76</sup>

Despite the Fetzer Institute's move away from energy medicine and energy healing technology, Fetzer funded research did have an impact on the field. Indeed, according to one researcher, Karl Maret,

The specific term "energy medicine" appears to have its origin in the late 1980s. The John E. Fetzer Foundation of Kalamazoo, MI sponsored an international Energy Medicine Conference held during February 27—March 1, 1987 in Madras, India. Many American scientists attended this meeting with sponsorship from the Fetzer Foundation. Of the more than 60 presentations that were delivered at this conference, 28 appeared in the 1988 publication *Energy Medicine around the World* edited by Dr. T.M. Srinivasan. ... He also collaborated with Dr. Elmer Green from the Menninger Foundation in some of this research. In 1989, both men, together with

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was duly incorporated in the State of Michigan ("Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." [September 9, 1985] [Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]; "Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Trustees John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." [November 8, 1985] [Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]; "Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Trustees Meeting John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc." [February 3, 1986] [Board Meeting Minutes, Binder 2]).

<sup>75</sup> Harvey Grady Oral History (January 27, 2012), p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> Linda Grdina (ed.), "The Fetzer Institute Program History Report" (October 2013), pp. 1-13. This paragraph is adapted from Wilson (2018), pp. 205-206.

Dr. Carol Schneider, founded the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energy and Energy Medicine [ISSSEEM].<sup>77</sup>

Since that time the number of subtle energy treatments, practices, and technologies have expanded greatly, although most are recognizable as variations on the few basic modalities discussed above, especially energy exchange through bodywork and energy resonance technology. However, two major changes have marked the field in the last twenty years. First, the wholesale adoption of the subtle energy symbolism from eastern forms of energy healing (primarily from chakra theory, but also from traditional Chinese medicine) has become commonplace with practitioners and researchers.<sup>78</sup> And second, various theories from quantum mechanics (e.g. quantum entanglement, the zero point field etc.) have been suggested, but not proven, to account for these elusive energies scientifically.<sup>79</sup> Only time will tell whether these quantum theories will simply function as another set of useful metaphors or whether their explanatory power will indeed lead to genuine breakthroughs in energy healing and technology.

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<sup>77</sup> Maret (2009). ISSSEEM ([www.issseem.org](http://www.issseem.org)) published the journal, *Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine*, until 2011, and in 2013 became associated with Holos University.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Davidson (1996) and Shealy (2011).

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, Tiller (1997), McTaggart (2002), Oschman (2016).

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